



# Synergist Spotlight on...

## Billing Plans

Billing Plans are the primary tool for forecasting within Synergist. The type of forecasting can be varied depending on requirements. The billing plan tab is not visible until activated and therefore is an optional function within Synergist. Some Synergist organisations currently manage this process outside of Synergist via a spread sheet however improved functionality over recent releases means this feature is becoming an essential in job management within Synergist.

### Types of forecasting via Billing Plans

1. **Forecasting Turnover** – Monthly expected sales invoiced values
2. **Forecasting Gross Profit** – Monthly income or Gross Profit (expected sales invoice values less third party costs)
3. **Forecasting potential Turnover** – Possible values of opportunities forecasted in the month that you might expect to raise an invoice.
4. **Forecasting potential Gross Profit** – Possible Gross Profit on opportunities forecasted in the month that you might expect to raise an invoice.
5. **Weighted values** of any of the above methods.

Your organisation may use one or two of these methods, the first are the most common.

To activate the **Billing Plan Tab** you would need access to **Tools & Settings & Company settings**.

Double click to select the Company and then go to the **Billing Plan tab**. Ticking **'enable Billing Plans'** will make the tab appear on each job.

The screenshot shows the 'billing plans' settings form in Synergist. The form is titled 'billing plans' and has a dropdown menu for 'billing plans' at the top right. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- enable billing plans**: A checked checkbox, circled in blue.
- billing plan levels allowed**: A section with a radio button for 'job only' and a radio button for 'phase only'.
- options**: A section with three checkboxes: 'synched with quote' (unchecked), 'notional costs/profit' (checked), and 'display day of month' (unchecked).
- relative dates**: A section with two radio buttons: 'fixed date (user enters dates manually)' (selected) and 'relative to ... (offset used)' (unchecked). Below these are two dropdown menus: 'job start date/expected close date' (job billing plans) and 'phase start date' (phase billing plans).
- enable auto billing plans**: A checkbox at the bottom.



## Recommended Settings

billing plan levels allowed

job and phase

job only

phase only

The most simplistic use of Billing plans, once activated, is to have one or multiple billing plans per job. It may be relevant for your Organisation to forecast at Phase level.

options

synched with quote

notional costs/profit

display day of month

If your requirement is to forecast Gross Profit, sometimes called 'income' or 'contribution' then select 'Notional costs/profit' in the settings.

relative dates

fixed date (user enters dates manually)

relative to ... (offset used)

job due date (job billing plans)

job due date (phase billing plans)

The most simplistic use would be to have fixed dates on billing plans. This means the user sets the date of each billing plan and amends the date if the forecast changes.

enable auto billing plans

Auto Billing Plans could become really useful if 100% of the quoted value is to be invoiced at the end of a job.



## Billing Plan Tab Entry

Go to the Billing Plan tab and click 'actions', 'New Billing Plan entry'

**date**

fixed date

relative to

**planned billing**

%	planned value	notional costs	profit forecast
100	£7000.00	£1000.00	£6000.00

manual planned value

synchronize planned value with quote

Add the following data to a Billing Plan entry:

- **Fixed date** – Select a date and manually change this date if the forecast is to change.
- **Planned Value** – The total invoiced/turnover value that is to be forecasted.
- **Notional costs** – If forecasting Gross Profit enter the value of any third party costs here in order to calculate a Profit forecast.
- **Comments** – Optional entry of notes & comments that could be used for invoice wording.

The Billing Plan tab shows a summary of the Billing Plan information. See Below:

phase	month	year	% billing planned	notional costs	profit forecast	billed in month invoices	comments
	Oct	2013	100.00	£15000.00	£5000.00	£10000.00	£0.00

Repeat the 'add new Billing Plan' process if the invoicing is to be staged.

- Add comments to enable clearer use.
- Manually adding **Notional costs** allows the user to enter in which month the invoiced values and the costs are forecasted

Edit

Actions

total value quoted	15,000.00
total est purchase costs	0.00

phase	month	year	% billing planned	notional costs	profit forecast	billed in month invoices	comments
	Oct	2013	50.00	£7500.00	£0.00	£7500.00	Stage 1 invoice of 50%
	Dec	2013	50.00	£3456.00	£044.00	£0.00	Final 50% Invoice




## Auto Billing Plans

May be useful when most jobs are invoiced at the end of the job. An Auto Billing plan generates a Billing plan entry based on 100% of the quoted value. Its date can be synchronized with the Job or Phase due date. This means when Job due dates are maintained; Billing plan dates can also be moved. Note this option only really works if invoicing the full amount based on the completion date. If not then Manual Billing plans are required.

## Quick billing plan

The quick Billing Plan wizard allows you to create a set of monthly billing plan items. The monthly values entered can be the quoted value divided equally between the months to be invoiced or can manually be added.

**Billing Plan Wizard**

 'Please select the starting month and number of plans you need (one for each month). Note: all plans must be dated either for the start of the month or for the end of the month'

fixed date    Starting month: 01/10/2013  start of month  
 relative to     end of month

Number of monthly billing plan stages to create:

manual planned value  
 synchronize planned value with quote

total quoted: £3149.10

date	% of quoted value	value	offset
01/10/13	20		0
01/11/13	20		1
01/12/13	20		2
01/01/14	20		3
01/02/14	20		4
totals			100%

1. Set dates to be fixed or relative to the quoted date.
2. Add number of monthly billing plans to be created.
3. Synchronize planned value with quote – This will create billing plans that are a % of the quote E.g. 20% per month for 5 months. If billing plan values are not equal each month then select '**manual planned value**' and type in a monthly amount. If synchronised with a quote and the quoted values change, the Billing planned value will also change.



### Relative dates

Ability to link the billing plan dates to Job/Phase dates by storing monthly “offset”. The billing plan can be based on key dates. The plan will automatically adjust if these dates are amended.

date

fixed date 30/11/2013

relative to job due date

offset 1 months to relative date

### Creating an Invoice based on Billing Plan

By selecting one or more lines from the billing plan and clicking the **Actions** button you can create an invoice based on the values in the plan.

Creating invoice based on **'Billing Plan' content** or create an invoice based on the **'quote' content** is possible. Invoicing continues as normal with the ability to mark as approved etc. before converted to real.

### Batch Draft Invoicing

New for version 10.6 allows the user to create a batch of draft invoices in one process.

1. Go to the draft invoice list.
2. Select **'Batch draft invoice'** and follow the invoice wizard.
3. To select jobs that have a billing plan this month that has not yet been invoiced click on the torch searchlight icon.
4. Filter the jobs to be invoice this month by **'Has Billing plan'** and add the dates for this month and tick **'unbilled only'**. Click OK and then select all the jobs that are displayed. This will create one invoice per job that has a billing plan. Then simply check, approve or delete any draft invoices that are created.

billing plans

has billing plans  unbilled only

from 01/09/2013 16 to 30/09/2013 16

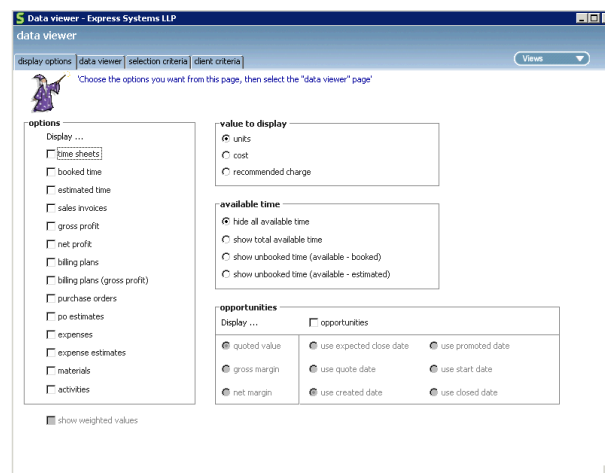
has no billing plans



## Billing Plan reports using the Data Viewer

Access the Data Viewer from the main **Reports** toolbar menu, and then click on the **Data Viewer** icon.

1. The '**Display Options tab**' lists the tables that can be reported on using Data viewer. Select one of these items and how you would like the data to be displayed. Tick '**Billing Plans**' or '**Billing Plans GP**'



2. The **Data Viewer** tab

### The data Cutter

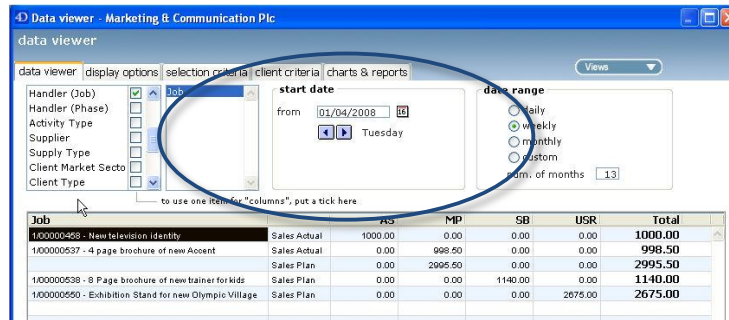
- Select how you want to "cut" or "format" the data. Drag Client or Job from the left hand list of tables & fields into the selection box.
- The order that these criteria are listed in will affect how the data is summarized. E.g. Drag Account handler above Client & Job to have data ordered primarily by Client.





### The date Range & period

- Select a date range by selecting a start date and whether you want to view the resulting data by day, week or month.
- The number of days/weeks/months can be entered here. E.g., start date 1/1/2013 with 12 monthly columns would produce data for the year.

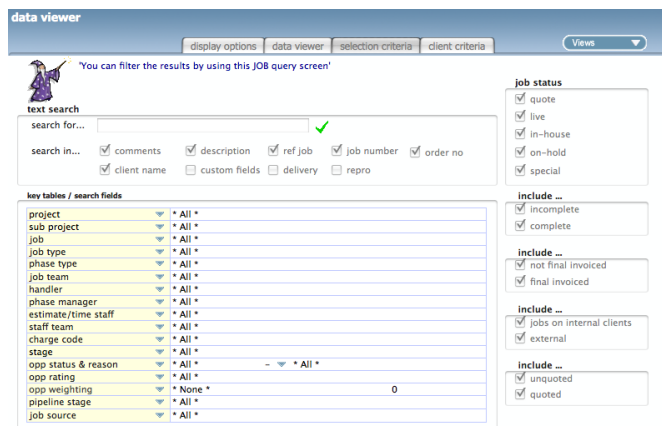


### 3. The selection criteria tab

The selection criteria tab is used to filter which data is displayed in the view. Multiple criteria can be applied. All records are displayed unless filtered.

#### For Billing Plan reporting

- Include live Jobs only
- Choose to include/exclude completed/final invoiced Jobs
- Exclude Internal jobs





#### 4. The **Client criteria** tab

This tab is used to further filter the resulting records, based on Client fields. This is particularly useful if you are creating a view of data related sales and marketing forecasts, etc. or if you are only interested in data for a single or set of specific Client.

### Views



5. Once you have selected the rows and columns, filters, date ranges, etc. you can save your selected settings to a view. Different types of views are possible to create:

- **User Views:** Only visible when you are logged on as yourself.
- **Group Views:** New in v10.5 to be able to save a report for a group of 'Account Handlers' or 'Management' for example.
- **Company Views:** An administrator has the rights to save Company views.





## Example Billing Plan Report using the Data viewer.

These are some useful examples of how flexible the data viewer can be when reporting. All of these could be saved as User, Group or Company views.

### 1. Monthly Billing Forecast

- Select Client and a month range of 3, 6 or 12 months, as required.
- Filter by Live, incomplete jobs.

Select the items you want to see (drag them from the window on the left), set the date options, then click the refresh icon'

**Data Type**

Activity Owner

Activity Type

Bill-to Client

Charge code

Client Market Sector

**Client**

**date & period**

01/05/2013

Wednesday

daily  
 weekly  
 monthly  
 custom  
 num. of mor

to use one item for "columns", put a tick here

Client		May 13	Jun 13	Jul 13	Total
Europcar	Sales Plan	19650.00	19650.00	1250.00	<b>40550.00</b>
Gmac	Sales Plan	28368.00	0.00	0.00	<b>28368.00</b>
Kids Club	Sales Plan	71746.31	65347.91	13336.57	<b>150430.79</b>
Rock Mill	Sales Plan	35042.85	18417.65	18418.45	<b>71878.95</b>
E-on	Sales Plan	0.00	1150.00	1150.00	<b>2300.00</b>
EMD	Sales Plan	16666.66	0.00	0.00	<b>16666.66</b>
Ethicon	Sales Plan	0.00	31080.00	0.00	<b>31080.00</b>
Mansons	Sales Plan	30898.20	30370.20	5007.00	<b>66275.40</b>
Richardson Hotels	Sales Plan	3450.00	3450.00	3450.00	<b>10350.00</b>
Parker	Sales Plan	6966.66	0.00	0.00	<b>6966.66</b>
St Johns Ambulance	Sales Plan	5732.76	5732.76	5734.48	<b>17200.00</b>
Paultons Park	Sales Plan	105106.17	53581.25	46943.75	<b>205631.17</b>
Total	Sales Plan	25051.20	4175.20	0.00	<b>29226.40</b>
RC Choppers	Sales Plan	12384.00	18576.00	0.00	<b>30960.00</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>361062.81</b>	<b>251530.97</b>	<b>95290.25</b>	<b>707884.03</b>

Try dragging in Job, Phase or Account Handler to get a more granular view.

### 2. Billing Plans compared to Actual Invoice. To create this report:

- Select both Sales Invoices and Billing Plans on the 'Display options Tab'
- Set the range of the report to be 1 month
- Add Handler, Client and Job or Job phase in the data cutter.
- Include all jobs, Live, completed, final invoiced in the selection.

sales invoices

gross profit

net profit

billing plans

billing plans (gross p



Add a **tick** into the **'data type'** column. This will then change the column heading to be the type of data selected i.e. Billing Plans and Sales Invoices.

data viewer

display options

Select the items you want to see (drag them from the options, then click the refresh icon)

Data Type  
 Activity Owner  
 Activity Type  
 Bill-to Client  
 Charge code  
 Client Market Sector

Client

date & time

01/05

to use one item for "columns", put a tick

Client	Sales Actual	Sales Plan
Europcar	0.00	19650.00
Gmac	0.00	28368.00
Kids Club	35835.00	71746.31
Rock Mill	8000.00	35042.85
EMD	0.00	16666.66
Mansons	0.00	30898.20
Richardson Hotels	3450.00	3450.00
Parker	0.00	6966.66
St Johns Ambulance	0.00	5732.76
Paultons Park	0.00	105106.17
Total	5678.00	25051.20
RC Choppers	3500.00	12384.00
Totals	56463.00	361062.81

This view is really useful if filtered by Account Handler and saved as a 'My view' for each Handler.

**Billing Plans are optional to use within Synergist but vital for forecasting and can replicate spread sheets that are being stored outside of Synergist. No additional software is required but activation of this area is required in Company settings.**

**Please contact Express Systems at [clientservices@exsystems.co.uk](mailto:clientservices@exsystems.co.uk) or 01455 553246 if you wish to discuss further the method of forecasting that is required by your organisation.**